

Exhibit Q



Dawn Dorland <dawndorland@gmail.com>

Inspiration or plagiarism? Writing hackles raised in Boston dispute - The Boston Globe

1 message

Dawn Dorland <dawndorland@gmail.com>
To: Maud Casey <mcasey@umd.edu>

Sat, Jul 28, 2018 at 4:47 AM

Dear Maud,

I have wondered for a long time whether you were aware that Sonya was working on this story (in your capacity as faculty at Warren Wilson). Comparisons of our letters are available at the link.

Yours,
Dawn

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/2018/07/26/inspiration-plagiarism-writing-hackles-raised-boston-dispute/YxzQNqAj6SY7jWElr8MxuL/amp.html>

Inspiration or plagiarism? Writing hackles raised in Boston dispute

Good artists copy, but great artists steal, or so the old saying goes. But the truth may be far more complicated, as shown by a recent case of alleged plagiarism that rattled through Boston's literary scene.

Accusations arose in June that a small section of a piece of short fiction chosen by the Boston Book Festival for its annual One City One Story program contained material lifted from another, real-life source. The group is planning to distribute now slightly modified copies of the work for free starting in late August.

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The story, "The Kindest," by Boston writer Sonya Larson, involves a kidney donation and was published last year in American Short Fiction to praise and acclaim. The objections, raised by a former friend of Larson who said the writer had lifted material from her Facebook post, eventually triggered legal and ethical inquiries, as well as questions of when and how it is acceptable for the stuff of real life — someone else's life in particular — to be transformed into art.



Chris Perry

Dawn Dorland

The dispute began in June 2015, when Los Angeles writer Dawn Dorland made a kidney donation. Dorland, who lived in Boston until 2011, says she has known Larson since 2005 as a friend and colleague at GrubStreet, the Boston literary nonprofit where Larson serves as director of the Muse in the Marketplace conference and advocacy.

Larson belonged to a private Facebook group in which Dorland posted updates for friends and family about her donation process.

In July 2015, a few weeks after her operation, Dorland posted a 380-word open letter she had written to a beneficiary of her donation about why she decided to get involved.

"In 2009 I read my first article about living kidney donation, and in the years since, I have been constantly reminded — whether triggered by my reading (I am a writer), or through the stories of people I know — of the harrowing experience of dialysis and the dire need in our country for kidneys," Dorland wrote.

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Larson has acknowledged that she saw the letter and that Dorland's donation to a stranger helped inspire her to write "The Kindest," a story told from the perspective of a woman who receives a kidney.

Larson never mentioned to Dorland the story she was working on. In June 2016, when Dorland heard about the tale through a mutual friend, she felt surprised and hurt not to have been looped in.

Dorland confronted Larson, who in turn defended her actions. "I want to emphasize that my

story is not about you or your particular gift, but about narrative possibilities I began thinking about in the context of kidney donation,” Larson wrote in an e-mail. “It is a work of fiction, formed wholly by my particular imagination,” she said in another.

Dorland did not read the story until June 2018, when she was surprised to find a donor letter in Larson’s fiction that bore striking similarities to her own. Dorland’s feeling of personal betrayal turned to professional indignation.

“I think it’s fairly obvious she was working from a copy of my letter,” Dorland said. “This isn’t really writing. It’s almost like Mad Libs. ‘I’ve got this structure and now I’m going to plug-and-play.’ ”

For instance, this is a line in Dorland’s original letter: “I focused a majority of my mental energy on imagining and celebrating *you*.”

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“I withstood the pain by imagining and rejoicing in *YOU*,” reads a line in the version of “The Kindest” published by American Short Fiction.

The original, 2016 version of “The Kindest,” published on Audible.com, put it even more closely: “I channeled my energies into imagining and celebrating *YOU*.”

“The Kindest” runs about 5,500 words, and the portion in question makes up about 100 words of that.

Larson denies copying Dorland’s post. “There’s only so many ways to write this letter. It’s a standard letter you write, and you can go online and find many samples of it — which is what I did. I wrote my own fictional letter,” she said.

“Fiction writers encounter ideas all the time from real life,” she added. “You’d be hard-pressed to find a writer who doesn’t work with real-life materials and fictionalize them.

Dorland said that some lawyers told her that the story might constitute an infringement of intellectual property law.

But lawyers consulted by the Globe say that while there appear to be strong similarities between the Facebook post and the note in the story, Dorland’s case could be a difficult one to win.

According to Joseph Liu, a professor at Boston College Law School, Larson could mount two

defenses: de minimis, or the idea that the extent of the copying is minimal so not worthy of punishment; and fair use, a doctrine of copyright law that allows for materials to be copied on a limited basis without permission from the original owner for certain educational or artistic purposes.

But some writers and editors say they can understand why the incident might trigger a confrontation, legal questions notwithstanding.

"As a writer, I would have told my friend, 'Hey, I'm writing this story. Can I use that?' I would have gotten permission," said Bret Lott, a novelist and former editor of The Southern Review. "It screams, 'I should have talked to my friend.'"

For their part, the institutions that have published "The Kindest" view the dispute as a private matter between the two writers, although both the Boston Book Festival and American Short Fiction have taken steps in reaction to Dorland's accusation.

The Book Festival asked Larson to rewrite the offending passages and printed a statement to accompany the story before printing it: " 'The Kindest' originally appeared, in slightly different form, in American Short Fiction Summer 2017." The story will be discussed at a town hall event at the festival in October.

Deborah Porter, festival founder and executive director, said that the story-selection committee was "100 percent unanimous that that was the appropriate acknowledgment."


American Short Fiction, which posted "The Kindest" online in May, decided to pull the story from the site in late June.

"After doing our due diligence, we found this to be more of a private issue between two acquainted writers," the editors said in a statement to the Globe. "In any case, the story had completed a one-month run on our website, and in the interests of finding an agreeable solution, we decided to sunset it."

Dorland says that she would be satisfied with an apology and a more specific acknowledgment of her contribution to the story, which she feels has been "erased" from the work.

"We as writers are free to do what we're free to do," Dorland said. "But I'm not going to hurt people I know by letting them read about their lives in my fiction first. If I'm going to borrow something from someone's life, I'm going to have a conversation with them."

From: Dawn Dorland dawndor and@gma .com
Subject: Boston Book Fest va cance s One C ty One Story event - The Boston G obe
Date: August 16, 2018 at 9:13 AM
To: samantha@gbagency.com



Boston Book Festival cancels One City One Story event amid plagiarism flap

The Boston Book Festival is canceling its popular One City One Story event, the latest development in a controversy ignited by plagiarism allegations that dogged Sonya Larson's "The Kindest," the work that had been selected for the marquee session, which will take place in October.

Deborah Porter, founder and executive director of the festival, said yesterday's decision was made under some legal pressure brought by Dawn Dorland, who accused Larson of lifting material from her Facebook post and using it in a section of her short story.

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"This is not a happy choice for us, as we have already sunk resources, time, and effort into this project. We are a tiny nonprofit with a very small staff, and we need to turn our attention now to our central mission, which is producing the Boston Book Festival," Porter said in an e-mail.

Dorland said she took no pleasure from the resolution. "I find it personally painful that the parties involved could not reconcile over the straightforward misrepresentation of another writer's original ideas, language — and in this case, personal trauma — as one's own literary creation," she said.

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Larson has said that her former friend's experience as a kidney donor served as inspiration for her fictional story of a woman who was a kidney recipient. But she has steadfastly denied plagiarizing from Dorland's online post.

"Fiction writers regularly encounter ideas in the world — whether from ads, catalogues, tombstones, or tweets — and we re-imagine and transform their elements for completely fictional narratives," Larson wrote in an e-mail to the Globe this weekend. "Let's keep this in perspective: Ms. Dorland's letter was not art; it was correspondence that she posted on Facebook."

Larson said yesterday that her position had not changed and that she was considering her own legal options.

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The saga began in June when Dorland notified festival organizers of her concerns about Larson's story. After examining the evidence, festival officials asked Larson, a program director at the GrubStreet literary center in Boston, to rework the contested section, and she agreed to do so.

In response to the controversy, American Short Fiction, which published "The Kindest" online in May, said in a June statement that "in the interests of finding an agreeable solution, we decided to sunset" the story, which had already "completed a one-month run on our website."

Late last week Audible and Brilliance Audio said they would suspend audiobook sales of the story. The decisions by the audiobook publishers, which are both owned by Amazon, came about after the discovery of a Brilliance version of the story, which contained more similarities to Dorland's Facebook post than did the Audible version or the one originally accepted by the Boston Book

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Festival.

The origin tale of the Brilliance version contains twists worthy of a detective mystery.

Larson recorded "The Kindest" for Audible in 2016, according to Yael Goldstein Love, editorial director of Plympton, which produces fiction for digital platforms. Goldstein Love helped connect Larson and Audible and provided a chronicle of the publication process, an account that was verified by Audible.

Around that same time, Dorland, who had heard about the existence of the story through a mutual friend, confronted Larson by e-mail about it. Dorland said that she had not yet read the piece and was unaware of any actual similarities. Instead she was upset to learn that a focus of Larson's tale was a kidney donation and that she had been left out of the loop.

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After a tense e-mail exchange, Larson circled back to Audible and on July 15, 2016, asked to re-record a short section of "The Kindest" — which included the material that would later become the focus of the dispute.

"The Kindest" was then re-recorded, and that revised version was released by Audible in August 2016 as a downloadable file.

But by mistake, Brilliance Audio accidentally published the original, unrevised version of "The Kindest."

"Personally, my childhood was marked by trauma and abuse; I didn't have the opportunity to form secure attachments with my family of origin," reads one line in Dorland's letter.

"My own childhood was marked by trauma and abuse; I wasn't given an opportunity to form secure attachments with my family of origin," reads the corresponding part of the Brilliance version.

"I've always acknowledged that I read her letter and found it inspirational," Larson wrote in an e-mail this weekend. "What I consented to have published is fiction, as is its language."

When contacted for response over the weekend, Eve Bridburg, founder and executive director of GrubStreet, said that "we're naturally troubled when accusations of this nature are raised, but the creative process is a complex one, and we do not publicly discuss specific issues involving our employees." On Monday a GrubStreet representative, who spoke on behalf of Bridburg, who was on vacation, said she stands by the comment.

I check email once daily at noon.

Sent by telepathy

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